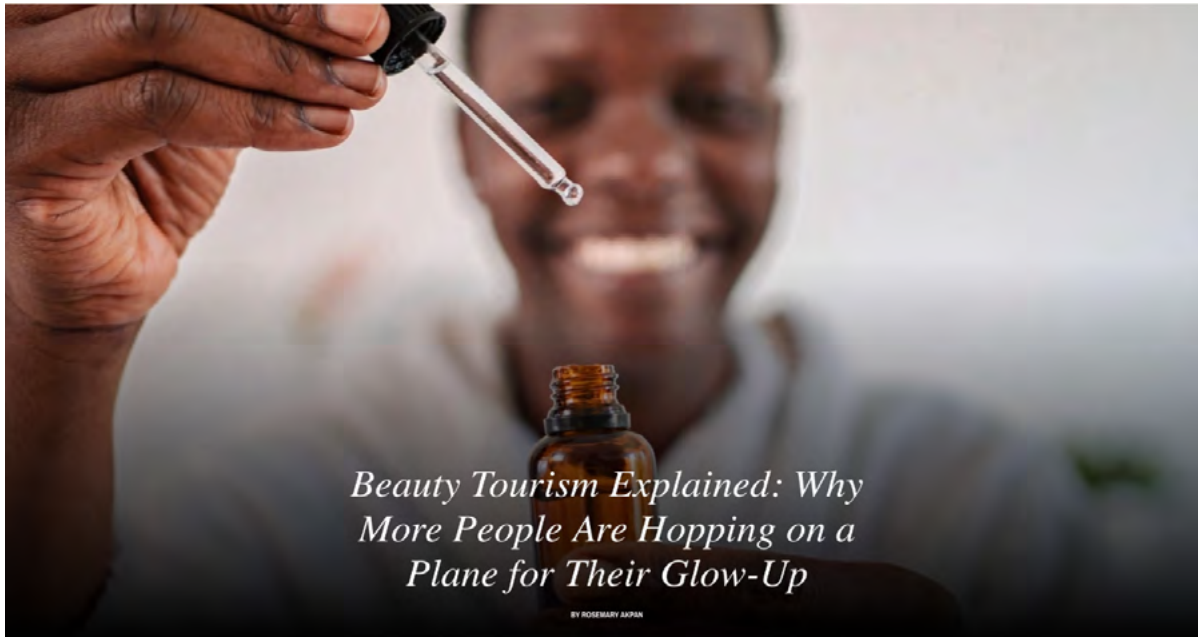


EBONY

Beauty Tourism Explained: Why More People Are Hopping on a Plane for Their Glow-Up

Rosemary Akpan | July 29, 2026



Credit: Getty Images

The main driver and appeal of beauty tourism is largely cost, as patients seek care abroad in hopes of receiving quality services at a more affordable price.

Key Takeaways

- Beauty tourism offers affordable cosmetic and medical treatments abroad, saving 20-80% costs.
- Popular procedures include hair transplants, ethnic rhinoplasty, dental work, and advanced facial treatments.
- Verify surgeon credentials, facility accreditation, and plan aftercare before traveling for procedures.

Porcelain smiles, lifted buttocks, fresh hairlines, and a chiseled nose are just a few ways travelers are returning home after traveling abroad to receive cosmetic work. No longer are people coming back with mini keepsakes they'd soon lose within the crevices of their homes. Instead, they're booking beauty treatments and procedures that coincide with a relaxing and discreet vacation overseas.

Beauty tourism, also known as medical tourism, is when people receive treatments and procedures in a different country. The main driver and appeal of beauty tourism is largely cost, as patients seek care abroad in hopes of receiving quality services at a more affordable price.

According to Patients Beyond Borders, savings can range from 20 to 80 percent for elective dental, cosmetic, or specialized medical care. Leading medical tourism destinations include Costa Rica, India, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and even the United States.

Things Travelers Are Getting

Hair Transplant: Male and female pattern baldness is a common struggle many face, which is why hair transplants have become an increasingly popular solution for those experiencing pattern hair loss. A hair transplant is a permanent option that surgically redistributes existing hair — moving healthy hair follicles from thicker parts to the thinning areas.

Ethnic Rhinoplasty: Rhinoplasties, also known as nose jobs, aren't a new phenomenon. However, the subtle-looking appearance of an ethnic rhinoplasty has patients traveling abroad for the unique nasal surgery. The specialized procedure focuses on refining the nose while preserving one's cultural features.

Dentistry: Another popular procedure people are getting in different countries is dental work. Depending on where you're located, dental work can cost a fortune, which is why patients are booking trips to get general, restorative, and cosmetic dental work. CareQuest Institute reports that roughly four percent of adults, nearly 9.6 million people, have pursued dental care abroad at some point due to the affordability gaps and systemic barriers within the U.S. dental care system.

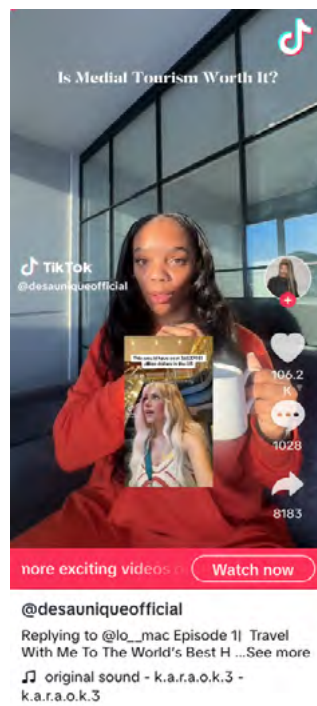
Facial Treatments: For a more advanced approach to skincare, some individuals are going overseas for facial and laser treatments. Travelers are getting everything from Salmon DNA and vampire facials to laser lifting and tightening treatments. In a story reported by ELLE, facial plastic surgeon and founder of Airem, Dr. Eunice Park, shared that "Korea is a leader in innovation, offering everything from advanced skin regeneration therapies to precision facial contouring techniques that are five to 10 years ahead of the United States." Giving travelers more of a reason to seek treatments abroad.



What To Know Before Booking

The idea of getting work done abroad may not seem as intimidating as it did back in the day, especially as it continues to grow increasingly popular among the masses. The CDC reports that millions of U.S. residents travel annually to various countries for medical care. While it may seem as simple as scheduling an appointment and hopping on a plane, **Dr. Steven Williams**, President Emeritus of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, shares a few things to consider before making travel arrangements.

“The truth is that there can be excellent plastic surgeons anywhere in the world. But it may be difficult to determine who is truly well-trained and equipped to provide excellent surgery until it is too late,” Dr. Williams tells EBONY.



The board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon recommends creating a checklist to ensure travelers aren’t putting their health and safety at risk. He suggests that potential patients should verify the surgeon’s credentials with their country’s national plastic surgery board. Also, cross-check the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) member directory, which has accredited international members and domestic members. Next, confirm the facility holds international accreditation, such as from the Joint Commission International. Afterwards, insist on a real consultation with the operating surgeon before travelling; get the aftercare plan in writing and build in recovery time before you fly.

“When complications surface back home, someone still pays: in one New York hospital system’s published review, treating complications for returning patients averaged roughly \$18,000 per person — often more than the trip saved,” says Dr. Williams. He adds, “a bargain you can’t verify isn’t a bargain; it’s a bet.”

<https://www.ebony.com/beauty-tourism-explained/>